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History of Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri River—Life and Adventures of Joseph La Barge, Pioneer Navigator and Indian Trader

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NEW PUBLICATIONS.

History of Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri River—Life and Adventures of Joseph La Barge, Pioneer Navigator and Indian Trader. By Hiram Martin Chittenden, Captain Corps of Engineers, U. S. A., with illustrations. 2 vols., N. Y., Francis P. Harper, pp. 461. 1903.

The accomplished engineer who supervised the erection of the Floyd monument at Sioux City, and learned author of "The American Fur Trade in the Far West," (ANNALS, v. 149, 544), has made another valuable contribution to American history. The Missouri river, and the prosperous commerce and trade upon it for fifty years, and the decline and passing away of that commerce and trade, are here described in connection with the life of its hero pilot, Captain Joseph La Barge. The author's skill invests the story with a charm and interest and pathos beyond the arts of romance.

A man of native force, firm texture, and indomitable resolution, Captain La Barge's life was crowded with business activity and thrilling adventure. In his seventeenth year he was a voyageur of the American Fur Company upon the Missouri river, and also employed on the steamboat Warrior upon the upper Mississippi, where he witnessed the tragic scenes that closed the Black Hawk war at Bad Axe, August 2, 1832. In the course of fifty years afterward he built and owned and navigated many steamers on the Missouri river, some of them large and palatial; and "there was not a bend or rapid, a bed of snags, or other feature in the twenty-six hundred miles from the mouth of the river to Fort Benton, that was not as familiar to him as the rooms of his own house." He never flinched in times of fright and terror, in tempest and storm, or in Indian alarms.

Captain Chittenden has woven into the history interesting items as to the questionable methods of the American Fur Company in its monopoly, and smuggling liquor into the Indian country; as to Audubon, the ornithologist, a passenger with Captain La Barge in 1843; the Mormon emigration to Salt Lake; Abraham Lincoln with Captain La Barge in the pilot house; Mr. Lincoln's address at Council Bluffs, August 12, 1859; the Indian wars, and army movements under Generals Harney, Crook, and Sheridan; the Custer Massacre, the mines of Montana, and other affairs of the period which the volumes cover.

In 1867 Captain La Barge made one of his most valuable trips from St. Louis to Fort Benton. With three hundred passengers and three hundred tons of freight, fare for cabin passengers three hundred dollars, freight twelve cents per pound, he made a clear profit of forty-five thousand dollars. The same year, forty steamboats passed Sioux City before the first of June on their way up the river. From 1870 to 1880 that city was the shipping point for all the work of the U. S. army on the upper Missouri. The great enemy of the Missouri river steamboat was not the difficult navigation of the river, but the railroad from the completion of the Hannibal & St. Joe in 1859 to 1887 when the Great Northern reached

Helena, Montana, and gave it a final blow. In 1890 the last commercial boat left Fort Benton. Railroad transportation triumphed over the steamboat.

The government improvement of the Missouri river, for which millions have been expended, though giving occasional and local relief, has proved a final failure. In an enlightened spirit Captain Chittenden asks in a closing chapter as to the destiny of the river. Does it still hold the germ of a future empire? Shall its waters that now run to waste be diverted into reservoirs and canals, be spread over vast tracts of arid land, and a population of twenty-five millions be sustained thereby? The disastrous floods of the Des Moines river in May, 1903, awaken a not wholly dissimilar inquiry, whether such desolations might not be guarded against by the construction of reservoirs to hold back the redundant waters.

W. S.

The Hamlin Family. A Genealogy of James Hamlin of Barnstable, Massachusetts, eldest son of James Hamlin, the immigrant who came from London, England, and settled in Barnstable, 1639. 1639-1902. By Hon. H. Franklin Andrews, author of "The Andrews Family, 1890," "The Hamlin Family, 1894," and "The Hamlin Family, 1900." Published by the author. Exira, Iowa, 1902.

This volume is one of the most considerable literary enterprises ever undertaken by a resident of our State. In fact, we know of none which in point of the labor involved can fairly compare with it. Its data was scattered all over the United States, Canada and Great Britain. Important facts were gathered from old letters, deeds and wills, and from other records preserved in public offices, from crumbling headstones and monuments over long-forgotten graves, from the memoranda set down in family Bibles and church registers. Its author is the Honorable H. F. Andrews, who was a well-known and influential State Senator in 1892-94, from the 17th District, composed of Audubon, Dallas and Guthrie counties. As the genealogy of an illustrious family it is most comprehensive. Aside from this it is a vast compendium of family and general history and biography. The book fills 1411 large octavo pages, and gives the names of 13,000 descendants of the family, among whom we find that of Hannibal Hamlin, who was elected Vice-President of the United States with President Abraham Lincoln in 1860. The work traces the genealogy of some members of the Hamlin family from the time of William the Conqueror to the present day. It has a copious index of nearly 100 pages. Altogether it is one of the fullest and most exhaustive family histories that has yet been published. It is illustrated with many steel and half-tone portraits of members of this and allied families. Mr. Andrews has achieved a distinguished success, which at once places him among the leading genealogists of these times, and he is to be congratulated upon having brought his stupendous task to such a satisfactory conclusion. The book has come from the press in superb style, so far as its printing, engraving and binding are concerned. It sells for \$10 per copy.

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